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“The Albanian Initiative: Coordinated Action Against Human Trafficking”—Launch Ceremony for USAID’s CAAHT projects in Shkodra

Shkodra - On 12 December 2005, Mr. Harry Birnholz, Mission Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Albania, announced that over \$105,500 USD will be invested in the Shkodra region through four grants awarded to local NGOs through *The Albanian Initiative: Coordinated Action Against Human Trafficking* (CAAHT). The purpose of these grants is to enable the citizens and government officials of the Shkodra qarku/prefecture to more effectively combat trafficking of human beings and to better assist children, girls and women who have become the victims of this terrible crime.

The grantee organizations that will be implementing anti-trafficking activities through July 2006 are: *All the Children Have the Same Human Value* and *Women in Development* in Shkodra, and *In Help of Northern Woman of Puka*. The Shkodra office of the *Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution* will serve as the local representative for a multi-prefecture initiative to use conflict and mediation skills in prevention of human trafficking and to assist the reintegration of trafficking victims.

The Prefect of Shkodra Qarku, Mr. Gjovalin Kolombi, and the President of the Regional Council, Mr. Lorenc Luka, expressed their appreciation with regard to this USAID initiative in the national and the local context, as well as their commitment to the implementation of anti trafficking projects in their locality.

Senior authorities and representatives from the Shkodra Local Government Institutions, including the Prefect, President of the Regional Council, Municipality, Police Directorate, as well as NGOs attended the event.

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CAAHT is a USAID-funded project which aims to combat the trafficking of women and children by reaching Albanian society through activities at national, district, and local community levels. For further information about the CAAHT Annual Conference and CAAHT program, please call 068 20 60 633 or visit the CAAHT web site: www.caaht.com.